



Strengthening the Human Rights of Older Persons

The Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing (MIPAA) and the Regional Implementation Strategy (RIS) are instruments for protecting the human rights of older persons. Both already provide indications of a change in the direction of international policy on older persons. While individual areas of action in international policy on ageing remain in the focus, to improve the living conditions of older persons worldwide, securing and reinforcing the human rights of older persons is increasingly developing into the global challenge of the future.

Links related to international policy on ageing

- United Nations:
www.un.org/en/sections/issues-depth/ageing/
- United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE):
www.unece.org/population/ageing.html
- Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth (BMFSFJ): www.bmfsfj.de/bmfsfj/meta/en/en/senior-citizens
- German National Association of Senior Citizens' Organisations (BAGSO) Secretariat on International Policy on Ageing:
www.bagso.de/bagso-german-national-association-of-senior-citizens-organisations.html

“A society for all ages” – that was the motto under which the Second UN World Ageing Plan, known as the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing, or MIPAA, was adopted in 2002 at the Second World Assembly on Ageing. It is based on the First UN World Ageing Plan, adopted in Vienna as early as 1982, which was comprehensively revised.

MIPAA is a comprehensive action plan with 118 paragraphs, addressing governments and economic circles as well as civil society. It formulates recommendations on dealing with the challenges and opportunities of demographic change. The goal worldwide: to improve the living conditions of older persons and protect their human rights.

In the same year that MIPAA was adopted, at a ministerial conference in Berlin the 56 member states of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) agreed on ten commitments with 100 paragraphs on the implementation of the MIPAA (Regional Implementation Strategy – RIS, 2002, Berlin).

Since then, at a ministerial conference of their countries every five years (2007, Leon; 2012, Vienna; 2017, Lisbon) the UNECE member states report on measures and progress in MIPAA implementation, and develop future strategies for further implementation that are adapted to current realities.

From the start, the German Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth (BMFSFJ) and the German National Association of Senior Citizens' Organisations (BAGSO) have been active partners in the implementation of MIPAA goals. They support and monitor European and international co-operation at government level and among civic stakeholders who stand up for older persons. Together, the two entities have succeeded in getting numerous measures and projects off the ground and providing fresh ideas internationally.

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Publikationsversand der Bundesregierung
Postfach 48 10 09
18132 Rostock
Tel.: +49 30 182722721
Fax: +49 30 18102722721
Telephone service for the deaf: gebaerdentelefon@sip.bundesregierung.de
E-Mail: publikationen@bundesregierung.de
www.bmfsfj.de

If you have any questions, use our
service telephone: +49 30 20179130
Monday–Thursday 9.00 a.m.–6.00 p.m.
Fax: +49 30 18555-4400
E-Mail: info@bmfsfj-service.bund.de

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Federal Ministry for
Family Affairs, Senior Citizens,
Women and Youth



Milestones in the Implementation of the Second UN World Ageing Plan (Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing – MIPAA, 2002) in Germany

Milestones

1982	The First UN World Ageing Plan is adopted in Vienna.
1990	The United Nations declare 1 October “International Day of Older Persons.”
1991	The United Nations adopt the “UN Principles for Older Persons.”
1992	Ten years after adopting the First UN World Ageing Plan, the United Nations draw up the UN Proclamation on Ageing. The UN General Assembly declares 1999 “International Year of Older Persons.”
1999	International Year of Older Persons
2002	The Second UN World Ageing Plan is adopted in Madrid (Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing – MIPAA).
2002	The United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) holds its first Ministerial Conference on Ageing in Berlin at the invitation of the German Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth; the 56 member states of UNECE adopt the Regional Implementation Strategy (RIS) with ten voluntary commitments and a Ministerial Declaration.
2003	From 2003 to 2005 the German National Association of Senior Citizen's Organisations (BAGSO) coordinates the contribution by civil society for production of the “German National Action Plan on Implementation of MIPAA and the UNECE Regional Implementation Strategy” (NAP) of the German Federal Government. For doing so a secretariat is created, financed by the Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth.

2004	The Commission for Social Development (CsocD) draws up a resolution on the shaping of the follow-up process of MIPAA and decides to review MIPAA every five years. The Federal Government is in regular attendance at the conferences of the Commission and participates in reports and statements.
2007	The second UNECE Ministerial Conference on Ageing takes place in León, Spain. A Ministerial Declaration is adopted here also.
2007	The Federal Government publishes the German National Plan of Action to implement MIPAA and the UNECE Regional Implementation Strategy.
2008	In Geneva the UNECE establishes the “UNECE-Working Group on Ageing”, headed by a small steering committee. Since 2013 the Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth has served as vice-chair in both bodies on behalf of Germany.
2008	The Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth supports the Secretariat in Geneva of the UNECE Working Group on Ageing with a junior professional officer’s position for 3.5 years, to further the implementation of MIPAA and RIS.
2009	The UNECE publishes its first policy brief, a short file with practical examples concerning selected commitments under the Regional Implementation Strategy. In ensuing years two more policy briefs are produced at regular intervals. All policy briefs have been translated into German. Aside from financing the production of six policy briefs in total by UNECE, Germany has funded the translation into German of half of all policy briefs.
2010	The United Nations set up the “Open-Ended Working Group on Ageing” at UN level aimed at considering and subsequently discussing existing frameworks for protecting human rights. The Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth is part of the Working Group in 2016 and 2017.

2011	The UN Secretary General presents to the UN General Assembly the Follow-up to the Second World Assembly on Ageing (A/66/173): the first report ever to provide an analysis of the human rights situation of older persons worldwide.
2012	The Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth publishes a first Country Report by the Federal Government marking 10 years of MIPAA and UNECE Regional Implementation Strategy (“Nationaler Bericht der Bundesregierung: 10 Jahre UN-Weltaltenplan und UN-ECE-Regionale Implementierungsstrategie”).
2012	European Year for Active Ageing and Solidarity Between Generations 2012: in the framework of implementing the European Year in Germany, the Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth sponsors 45 projects.
2012	The third UNECE Ministerial Conference on Ageing takes place in Vienna. A further Ministerial Declaration is adopted.
2012	The third Regional Intergovernmental Conference on Ageing in Latin America and the Caribbean is held in San José, Costa Rica. A charter on protecting the human rights of older persons is adopted: the “San José Charter on the Rights of Older Persons in Latin America and the Caribbean.”
2013	The Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth provides UNECE with funding for the production of three UNECE Policy Briefs.
2015	The first Asia Europe Meeting (ASEM) Conference on Global Ageing and Human Rights of Older Persons takes place in Seoul, Korea. The Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth attends.
2016	The Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples’ Rights on the Rights of Older Persons in Africa identifies central areas for the protection of older persons.
2016	The first ASEM Expert Forum on Human Rights of Older Persons is held in Seoul, Korea.

2016	The German National Association of Senior Citizens’ Organisations (BAGSO) attends the seventh Session of the UN Open-Ended Working Group on Ageing in New York as a representative of civil society for the first time.
2016	The Independent Expert on the enjoyment of all human rights by older persons, Rosa Kornfeld-Matte, appointed in 2014 by the Human Rights Council of the United Nations, publishes a report on the human rights of older people worldwide. Sizeable gaps in protection are found.
2017	The German Institute for Human Rights carries out two expert discussions supported by the Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth, on discrimination and violence, abuse, and neglect directed at older persons.
2017	The Inter-American Convention on Protecting the Human Rights of Older Persons comes into force.
2017	The German Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth publishes the second Country Report by the Federal Government, marking 15 years of MIPAA and UNECE Regional Implementation Strategy (“Nationaler Bericht der Bundesregierung: 15 Jahre UN-Weltaltenplan und UNECE-Regionale Implementierungsstrategie”).
2017	Within the German National Association of Senior Citizens’ Organisations (BAGSO), the Secretariat on International Policy on Ageing becomes operational. It is funded by the Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth.
2017	The BAGSO Secretariat on International Policy on Ageing holds its first expert conference: “International Policy on Ageing – Global Commitment for and with Older Persons.”
2017	The second ASEM Conference on Global Ageing and Human Rights of Older Persons is held in Seoul, Korea, with active participation by the Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth.

2017	In the follow-up process marking 15 years of MIPAA, the BAGSO Secretariat on International Policy on Ageing organises its first workshop.
2017	At their fourth Regional Intergovernmental Conference on Ageing, the governments of Latin America and the Caribbean reaffirm their commitment to promote the human rights of older persons. To do so a Ministerial Declaration is prepared.
2017	The German National Association of Senior Citizens’ Organisations (BAGSO) attends the eighth Session of the UN Open-Ended Working Group on Ageing in New York, as a representative of civil society for the second time.
2017	The fourth UNECE Ministerial Conference on Ageing takes place in Lisbon. Another Ministerial Declaration is adopted.
2017	The Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth finances the production of three further UNECE Policy Briefs.
2018	To support the MIPAA follow-up process the BAGSO Secretariat on International Policy on Ageing organises three workshops; e.g. at the 12 th German Senior Citizens’ Day in Dortmund.
2018	At the ninth Session of the UN Open-Ended Working Group on Ageing, the interests of civil society are represented by BAGSO for the third time.
2019	The BAGSO Secretariat on International Policy on Ageing holds its second expert conference.